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ficient to perpetuate the error. Certainly, until the last decade of the nineteenth century, no one doubted that the theorem was Simson's. Now, however, there seems no reason to believe that he ever heard of it.

If, then, the theorem is Wallace's, should it not be given his name, in tardy recognition of the debt we owe him? After Mackay's researches had been published, he and other Scotch writers made the innovation, unwisely it seems to the present writer. At present, custom is divided. No author dares use one name without mentioning the other.

In any such situation, it is obvious that an attempt to effect a change from a universally established term to a new one will involve such an amount of confusion that we must convince ourselves that the advantages are sufficient to outweigh the inconveniences. The most powerful, and perhaps only reason for changing is that of justice, to assure to every discoverer the credit due him. This seems inadequate. In general, the fact that a theorem is named for a man is neither a sufficient indication that the theorem was discovered by him, nor, on the other hand, a definite characterization of the theorem. The classic example of an unjustly named theorem is Cardan's solution of the cubic, discovered, as is well known, by Tartaglia; several cases of the same kind will occur to the reader. On the other hand, the expression "Steiner's Theorem," for instance, may mean any of numerous familiar theorems. If, in particular, we continue to designate the line under discussion as Simson's line, or rather as the Simson line, we shall not be implying that it was discovered by Robert Simson, but that his name is attached to it by long-established custom.

There is, however, another reason for opposing the change, more cogent than this. The term "Wallace's line" already has a well defined meaning in another field of science, namely Zoögeography. According to Webster's New International Dictionary, it was named for Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, and is "an imaginary line separating the Oriental and Australian regions. . . . The faunas on either side of the line are remarkably distinct." Now it is not likely that this line will be confused with the one mentioned in our theorem, but it would seem that since we are in a position to choose, the wisest choice is that which avoids all possibility of confusion.

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Board of Editors:

Thinking in retrospect of the organization meeting at which the Mathematical Association of America was launched, I desire to congratulate you upon the very successful issues of the meeting, and upon the very auspicious beginning of the new Association.

One thought has occurred to me that I have not yet heard expressed. It relates to the toast on "The economic value of the young" to which Professor Hedrick so aptly responded at the luncheon tendered by the mathematics faculty of the University of Ohio. Now, economic considerations are of very vital import to the average teacher of mathematics. His salary, as well as his rank and professional standing, are very closely related to the way in which he is regarded by other mathematicians, in his own institution and throughout the country. His advancement usually depends upon a change from one institution to another, or on the prospect of such a change. Until the present time the only way of claiming the regard and good opinion of mathematicians outside of one's own institution has been through research. This has resulted in great emphasis on activities in research and small emphasis on effective teaching, when appointments and promotions are considered. The new association should become an avenue through which an effective teacher may gain the good opinion of the profession at large because of the quality of his work and through contributions to the solution of the problems of the teacher. In this way salary, rank, etc., may come to be more closely related to service rendered. May not the new born Association thus become a very material economic asset to many worthy teachers of mathematics?

The economic motive may become an influence of considerable proportions in promoting activities in the new Association, as I believe it has been in promoting research which finds its expression through the old Society.

RALPH E. ROOT.

U. S. NAVAL ACADEMY,
January 4, 1916.

ECHOES FROM THE COLUMBUS MEETING.

All will be interested to know that the membership list of the Association is growing apace, over one hundred per week being the record for the time since the announcements were distributed. It is taken for granted that all who signed the call for the organization meeting will come in as charter members. In fact, the membership committee of the Council has already elected all of these persons to membership so that there will be no delay when their names are received. Large numbers of them are already in, as well as many of those whose names were received too late to appear in the call.

Attention is again called to the provision of the Constitution that in the case of all who join the Association before April 1, 1916, the initiation fee is to be waived. Doubtless, many who fully intend to take advantage of this provision may find themselves characterized in the following note just received from a prominent member of the faculty of a great New England University:

> You may have wondered why I did not join the Mathematical Association earlier, if you thought about it at all. It has been negligence and not lack of appreciation for the movement you have had so much to do with. I feel a large personal debt to the MONTHLY, and I believe it will do even more good in the future than in the past.

It is confidently believed that such declarations of allegiance, just at this time, to the Mathematical Association of America, will prove to be as important a service to the cause of mathematics in this country as may be rendered by those who are in any way related to the collegiate field. The establishment of a widely